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Academics (East Asia)

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Chen

TALKING POINTS:

EAST ASIA AND THE US NATIONAL ESTIMATES BUSINESS

I. INTROD.

A. Disadvantages:

1. E. Asia vs. global. The hazard of thinness.
2. No knowledge of what's gone before, today. The hazard of redundance.
3. Late in the aft. The hazard of MEGO.

B. Advantages:

1. I think I know what many of your interests are. This comes from my own broad and chequered experience: E. Asia, DDI, DDO, college professor, academic coordinator, and staffer with the US Senate intel oversight committee.
2. Having thus sold guns to all sides, perhaps I can help you understand our Company and its needs a little better.
3. Another advantage: I shall be fairly brief.
 - A few words on (1) the estimates business and how it differs from that of my DI colleagues; (2) some examples of the kinds of E. Asian questions we're most interested in; (3) some examples of skills we're looking for, in addition to good general grounding in E. Asian and world affairs; and then (4) invite your comments and questions.

II. THE ESTIMATES BUSINESS

- A. Genesis. Began in the fall of 1950, after fairly poor USG intel performance on Korea. Has continued to this day, all US Administrations wishing to assure that (1) all avail. evidence has been brought to bear, and shared, (2) objective, dispassionate judgments, free from policy or budgetary coloring. (I have been in and around that endeavor since 1951.)
- B. Cf. NIC with OEAA.
 1. Many similarities of interest and work. Constant close touch. OEAA (and other DDI) officers draft many of our estimates.
 2. Differences of interest:
 - a. CIA cf. intel. community: coordinated (or dissents) -- both a plus and minus operation.
 - b. OEAA = more intensive experts. NIC = broader, thinner.
 - c. Generally NIC takes on longer range questions. Often next 2-3 years. Sometimes longer: I recently did a world outlook through the year 2000. It will probably deserve a lot of laughs.
 - d. Have to go more out beyond evidence. Often thus a matter of "feel."
 - e. NIC = perhaps greater emphasis on the so-what of this or that prospect for US security interests.
- C. Examples of Estimates' Concerns: What are the long range EA questions of greatest consequence for the US?
 1. The future of Sino-Soviet relations: the overriding need for the US to avoid a renewed Sino-Soviet alliance -- and the strategic consequences that would entail.

- Old stories of "non-antagonistic contradictions," etc. My role.
- Now we must be ever vigilant not to get locked in once again to supposed eternal verities.

2. The long range future of China.

- The awakening dragon which shakes the world?
- The reborn 19th Century melon, waiting to be cut up once again?
- Or, a China that sorta rocks along?

3. The Japan-US alliance competition over the long run. More of same, or any sharp departures in present patterns?

4. The long run security of Japan. Hence the future of the Korean peninsula.

5. The long run Soviet military position in the Western Pacific. The Pacific Fleet. Bases -- Cam Ranh Bay. A future NPA Philippines?

D. Skills we're looking for

ILLEGIB

1. Good grounding in world affairs: e.g., how East Asian questions fit into larger pictures. Where did the PRC come from? The same for the Viet Minh and the Viet Cong, and why did their soldiers fight so well? Where did the USSR come from, and what have been its relations with China? Econ and Japan.
2. Above all, the ability to write and speak the English language well.
3. Professional use of evidence: thorough, dispassionate.
4. Courage of convictions. Delight in telling it like it is, whatever the predilections or reactions of our consumers. We are not in business to please them, but to enlighten them -- no matter how uncongenial our judgments may be.

5. Commitment to the intellectual challenge and the idea of service, not to what's in it for me.
 6. Concern for policy relevance. Ability to ask, so-what? Why should busy, harassed senior policymakers bother to read my stuff or listen to my briefing?
 7. Ability to distill the essence of problems -- from masses of ambiguous evidence -- and then to write or speak those key judgments succinctly, forcefully, and persuasively.
 8. Ability to work with people. Street smarts. Avoid shrinking violets and prima donnas, alike.
 9. Understanding of the policy process, of US Government, and what policy is and is not composed of.
 10. Understanding of the potentials -- and the limits -- of intel.
 11. Personal qualities: imagination, self-starting, initiative, resilience.
 12. PhD preferred, but not mandatory. But at least an MA, and preferably also other outside experience -- military, business, travel, hard knocks.
 13. In a nutshell -- the best people we can find. No shortcuts via computers, quantitative analysis, gadgetry, or whatever.
- Sherman Kent, 1949:

"Whatever the complexities of the puzzles we strive to solve, and whatever the sophisticated techniques we may use to collect the pieces and store them, there can never be a time when the thoughtful man can be supplanted as the intelligence device supreme. . . . Great discoveries are not made by second-rate minds, no matter how they may be juxtaposed organizationally."

An identical conclusion has most recently been made by Walter Laqueur, in his just-published excellent book on intelligence, A World of Secrets.

14. Hence we invite you to send us your very best graduate students. There will continue to be great need for such people, to tell it like it is to Jack Kemp, Mario Cuomo, and their successors.